

AGENDA: February 10, 2004

7.1

CATEGORY: New Business

DEPT.: Public Works

TITLE: Senior Center Demolition,
Project 04-28A—Approve Plans and
Specifications and Heritage Tree Removal

RECOMMENDATION

1. Approve plans and specifications for the Senior Center Demolition, Project 04-28A, and authorize staff to advertise the project for bids.
2. Approve the removal of 21 Heritage trees and the mitigation measure of 3:1 tree replacement with 24" box trees with flexibility to use larger trees at a lower replacement ratio, as recommended by the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC).

FISCAL IMPACT

The design and construction of the new Senior Center, Project 04-28, including demolition of the existing Senior Center, is partially funded in the 2003-04 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) in the amount of \$16,475,000. An additional \$1,000,000 is proposed for funding in the 2004-05 CIP. Demolition of the existing Senior Center, including hazardous materials removal, is estimated at \$511,000. Tree removal and mitigation planting will be funded from the project budget.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

Senior Center Demolition

On November 19, 2002, the City Council approved the Senior Center/Community Center Master Plan (Master Plan) and the location of the interim Senior Center on the existing Senior Center site. A copy of the Master Plan is included as Exhibit 1. On November 12, 2003, the interim Senior Center opened, and the old Senior Center building is no longer in use. Plans and specifications have been prepared for demolition of the old Senior Center in anticipation of construction of the new Senior Center beginning in fall 2005. Demolition of the Senior Center will also provide room on the site for construction staging for Avenidas' senior day health-care facility beginning in summer 2004.

In response to Council's direction to incorporate green building techniques to the extent practical in the Senior Center project, staff has included two green building elements in the Senior Center demolition project. First, a number of building components will be salvaged and reused by the Facilities Division of the Public Works Department. These include rooftop mechanical units, thermostats, emergency exit floodlights, electrical system equipment, automatic doors, door closers and fire extinguishers. Secondly, the project specifications require the demolition contractor to recycle at least 50 percent of the demolition material by weight. The specifications include a list of facilities in Santa Clara County that have been audited to verify that at least 50 percent of their accepted material is diverted from burial in landfills.

The estimated project cost for the Senior Center demolition is as follows:

Construction (including HazMat removal)	\$340,000
Construction Contingency	30,000
Design and Construction Documents	30,000
Geotechnical Engineering and Testing	20,000
City Project Management and Inspection	<u>60,000</u>
Subtotal	\$480,000
City Administration @ 6.5%	<u>31,000</u>
TOTAL	<u>\$511,000</u>

Staff anticipates beginning demolition in April 2004, with completion expected by the end of May 2004. Access to the interim Senior Center will be maintained throughout demolition and will be separate from the construction access to the site.

Heritage Tree Removal

On October 8, 2003, the Urban Forestry Board considered mitigation for the removal of 23 Heritage trees as part of the Senior Center project. The trees proposed for removal can generally be categorized in three groups:

1. Twelve Heritage trees are near the old Senior Center building and are either within or very near the footprint of the new Senior Center or conflict with other proposed site improvements. Ten of these trees would be removed during demolition of the old Senior Center building and the remaining two are not in the way of the demolition work, so would be removed with construction of the new Senior Center.

2. Ten Heritage trees on the southwesterly portion of the site were proposed for removal to create sufficient parking to serve the Senior Center and the senior day health-care facility. A parking study prepared for the City by RKH Civil and Transportation Engineering in August 2003 recommended that a minimum of 153 parking spaces be provided for the Senior Center and senior day health-care facility. As explained below, staff is now recommending removal of only eight of these trees in this portion of the site, including five of the seven along the southerly property line.
3. One Heritage tree at the northeasterly corner of the site is proposed for removal to allow access for construction of the new Senior Center after completion of the senior day health-care facility. This will permit users of the interim Senior Center exclusive use of the southerly driveway and separation from construction traffic.

The Urban Forestry Board recommended a mitigation ratio of 3:1 with 24" box trees for the Heritage trees to be removed, with consideration given to planting larger replacement trees at a lower mitigation ratio. If approved by Council, staff and the City's designers will consider strategic locations to plant larger 36" or 48" box trees at a replacement ratio of 2:1 or 1:1, depending on the relative cost of the larger trees compared with 24" box trees. This will increase design flexibility and allow variations in the shapes and sizes of trees to be planted. A copy of the Urban Forestry Board staff report and minutes is included as Exhibits 2 and 3.

At the Urban Forestry Board meeting, two neighboring residents requested that the trees on the southwesterly corner of the site not be removed or that the removal be minimized. Some of these trees provide screening for the neighboring apartment building. One of the residents gathered 67 signatures on a petition opposing the removal of the Heritage trees on the site. A copy of the petition is included as Exhibit 4.

In response to the neighbors' concerns about removal of the trees at the southwesterly corner of the site, staff consulted with arborist Michael Bench from the office of Barrie D. Coate & Associates to seek recommendations for preserving some of the trees. Mr. Bench assessed the condition of the seven trees along the southerly property line of the Senior Center site next to the neighboring apartment building. Mr. Bench reported that one of the trees is in fine health and the remaining six trees exhibit signs of varying degrees of poor health, including cavities, sparse canopy, insect infestation and internal decay, which, in some cases, can lead to limb breakage. Mr. Bench recommended removal of three of the trees that are in poor health and stated that removal of the other three was reasonable based on their marginal to poor condition and the requirements of the project regarding parking supply. The arborist also recommended minimum distances that should be maintained from site improvements to trees that are preserved. The arborist's report is included as Exhibit 5.

To reduce impacts on the neighboring apartments, staff recommends preserving two of the seven trees along the southerly property line, including the one in good and one in moderate health. The staff recommendation allows for the construction of slightly more than the recommended minimum number of parking spaces and allows some design flexibility as layout of the site features progresses. An exhibit showing all of the trees proposed for removal on the site is included as Exhibit 6.

On January 14, 2004, staff met with several of the neighbors who are concerned with the tree removals to explain the project, the proposal to remove the trees and the plan to preserve two of the trees. The residents expressed their desire that all seven of the trees be left in place. As design of the Senior Center landscaping progresses, an effort will be made to identify opportunities to plant larger mitigation trees to replace the trees removed from the area adjacent to the concerned neighbors.

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines, this project was deemed categorically exempt per Section 15302(b), and a Notice of Exemption was filed with the Santa Clara County Clerk's Office. The Senior Center demolition is part of a project that involves replacement of a commercial structure with a new structure of substantially the same size, purpose and capacity.

ALTERNATIVES

If Council elects to preserve one additional marginal tree along the southerly property line (Tree No. 92 or No. 95 on Exhibit 6), the minimum number of parking spaces could still be achieved on the site. The tradeoff would be giving up the few spaces above the minimum recommended and losing some design flexibility as layout of the site features progresses. Based on the current site plan, to preserve both of these marginal trees the number of parking spaces would fall below the minimum by about three spaces. It may be possible to recover these spaces by reducing landscaping in other parts of the parking lot.

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PUBLIC NOTICING—Agenda posting; posting of trees on the site.

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JR/6/CAM
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Attachments: Exhibit 1—Senior Center/Community Center Master Plan
Exhibit 2—October 8, 2003 Urban Forestry Board Staff Report
Exhibit 3—October 8, 2003 Urban Forestry Board Minutes
Exhibit 4—Petition
Exhibit 5—November 12, 2003 Consulting Arborist's Report
Exhibit 6—Senior Center Site Plan

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Parks and Recreation Commission

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